

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 06204 061743Z

63

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-04 USSS-00 SCCT-02 OMB-01 NIC-01

SAJ-01 OPR-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 /112 W

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R 061625Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4642

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 6204L

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, IT

SUBJECT: "RED BRIGADES" DEMAND RELEASE OF "POLITICAL PRISONERS"
IN EXCHANGE FOR KIDNAPPED OFFICIAL

REF: ROME 5923, 5659

1. IN LETTER DATED MAY 4, KIDNAPPERS OF GENOA DEPUTY PROSECUTOR SOSSI STATE THAT THEY HAVE FINISHED INTERROGATING THEIR CAPTIVE BUT WILL FREE HIM ONLY UPON RELEASE OF EIGHT IMPRISONED "OCTOBER 22" GROUP LEFTIST TERRORISTS, INCLUDING CONVICTED KILLER MARIO ROSSI. "RED BRIGADES" DEMAND THAT THE EIGHT BE FLOWN TO CUBA, ALGERIA OR NORTH KOREA AND PROMISE THAT SOSSI WILL BE FREED UPON CONFIRMATION OF THEIR SAFE ARRIVAL. "RED BRIGADES" LETTER CONTAINS IMPLICIT THREAT THAT GOVERNMENT MUST GIVE IN TO THE DEMANDS "TO AVOID WHAT NOBODY WANTS BUT WHICH NOBODY CAN EXCLUDE".

2. COMMENTING ON DEMAND BY "RED BRIGADES", INTERIOR MINISTER TAVIANI (CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT) TERMED "ABSURD" ANY IDEA OF STRIKING A DEAL WITH THE TERRORISTS AND ANNOUNCED THAT POLICE EFFORTS TO FIND SOSSI WOULD CONTINUE. DC SECRETARY FANFANI ALSO CALLED FOR FIRM STAND AGAINST RED BRIGADE "PROVOCATIONS".

3. IN MOVE NO DOUBT INTENDED TO DEMONSTRATE POLICE DETERMINATION TO PRESERVE LAW AND ORDER, CARABINIERI (PAR MILITARY POLICE)
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PAGE 02 ROME 06204 061743Z

CARRIED OUT A LARGE SCALE SWEEP IN NORTHERN ITALY OVER THE WEEKEND.

OVER 500 PERSONS WERE ARRESTED AND 2200 ORDERED TO REPORT FOR POLICE INTERROGATION. ALONG WITH A MASSIVE QUANTITY OF STELEN GOODS, POLICE CONFISCATED OVER 200 KILOS OF EXPLOSIVES AND 668 SMALL ARMS.

4. COMMENT: THE DEMAND FOR RELEASE AND DELIVERY ABROAD OF CONVICTED TERRORISTS CONFRONTS THE GOVERNMENT WITH A DIFFICULT CHOICE. THERE CAN BE NO ILLUSION IN THIS CASE, BUT THAT ANY SUCCESS OF RED BRIGADES BLACKMAIL WILL COME HOME QUICKLY TO ROOST. THIS THE DRAMITIC MODE OF RELEASE DEMANDED,AND THE INITIAL NEGATIVE REACTION OF INTERIOR MINISTER TAVIANI APPEAR TO MAKE GOVERNMENT CAPITULATION ON ISSUE UNLIKELY. ANY PREDICTION WOULD BE PREMATURE, HOWEVER, UNTIL ITALIAN REACTION IS MEASURED IN THE EVENT OF POSSIBLE FUTURE SPECIFIC THREATS TO THE LIFE OF THE HOSTAGE. VOLPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARAMILITARY FORCES, KIDNAPPING, POLITICAL SITUATION, POLICE INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ROME06204
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740109-0213
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740571/aaaacitc.tel
Line Count: 75
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: ROME 5923, 5659
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <03 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: "RED BRIGADES" DEMAND RELEASE OF "POLITICAL PRISONERS" IN EXCHANGE FOR KIDNAPPED OFFICIAL
TAGS: PINT, PINS, IT, RED BRIGADES, (SOSSI, MARIO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005